The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 44, No. 2, February 2012

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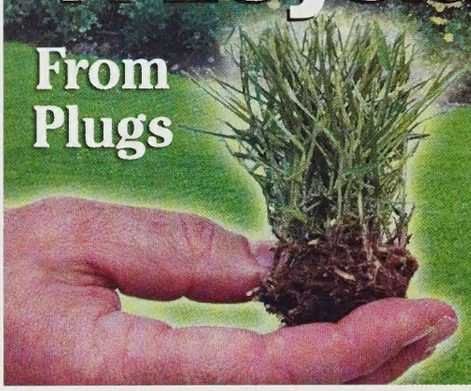
ALSO INSIDE:

Restoring the oyster fishery

Sealing mobile homes

Which is better: fireplace or woodstove? — page 40

SAVE When You Grow A Zoysia Lawn From Plugs!



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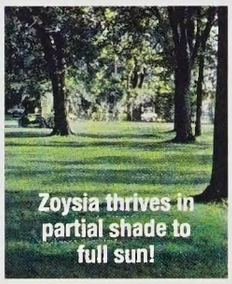

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February 2012
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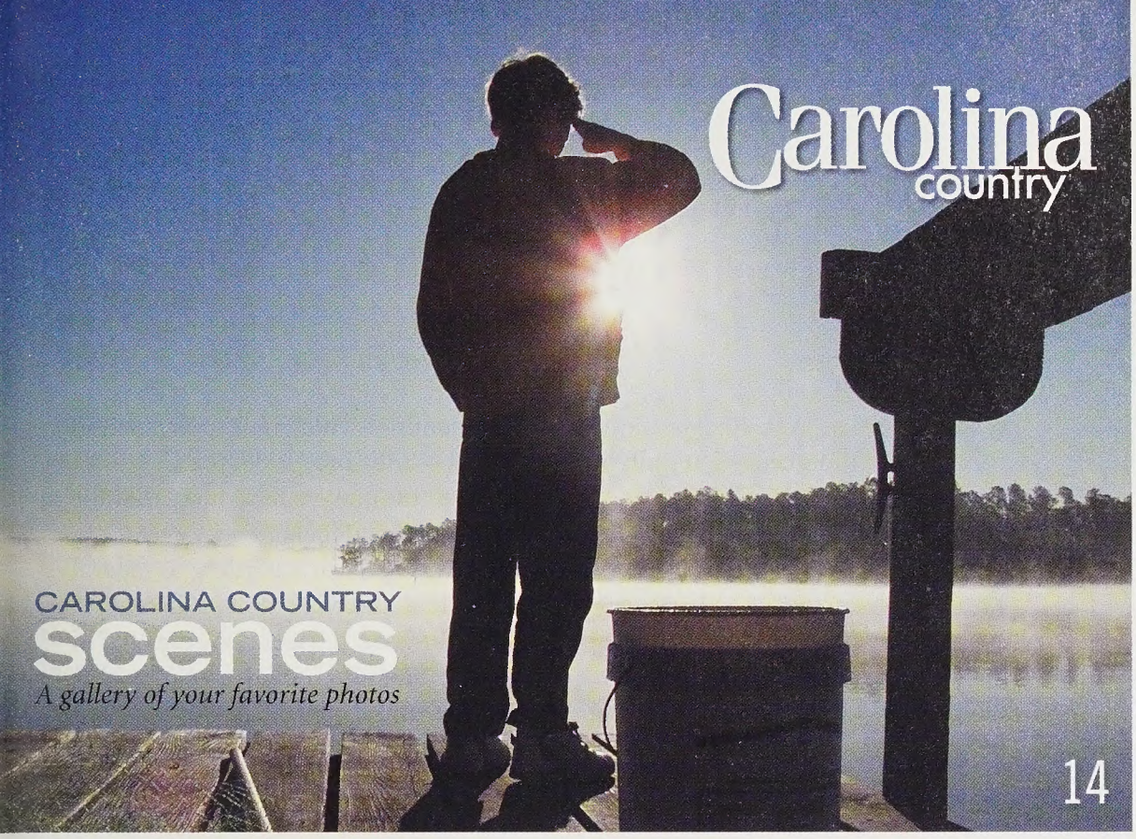

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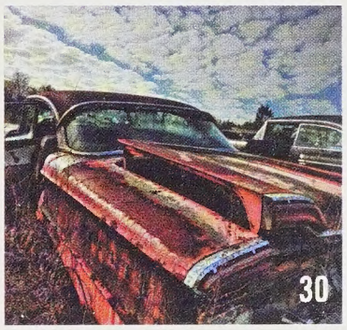

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ON THE COVER

Candice Smith of Denton took this photo of her son Noah, 2, in the snow that came after Christmas 2010. See more of your favorite photos on pages 14–19 and at www.carolinacountry.com

Carolina country
(ISSN 0008-6746) (USPS 832800)
2010 George W. HAGGARD Memorial Journalism Award
Read monthly in more than 650,000 homes
Published monthly by North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
3400 Sumner Blvd.
Raleigh, NC 27616
www.carolinacountry.com

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Carolina Country magazine is a member of the National Country Market family of publications, collectively reaching over 8.4 million households.

Carolina Country is available on cassette tape as a courtesy of volunteer services at the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Raleigh, N.C. (888) 388-2460.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27616. Carolina Country® is a registered trademark of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes Form 3579 to Carolina Country, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.

Subscriptions: Individual subscriptions, $10 per year. $20 outside U.S.A. Schools, libraries, $6.

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Did they outlaw the 100-watt light bulb?

By Michael E.C. Gery

What happened to the old-fashioned 100-watt incandescent light bulb on Jan. 1? Did Congress outlaw it?

The answer is no.

In 2007, with support from the Bush Administration and the lighting industry, Congress enacted the Energy Independence and Security Act. Among other things, the legislation mandated that as of Jan. 1, 2012, the 100-watt light bulb must be 30 percent more efficient than older models. The same legislation affects the efficiency of 75-, 60- and 40-watt bulbs beginning in January 2013 and January 2014. The measures are intended to raise energy-efficiency standards so that Americans can save an estimated $6 billion to $10 billion in lighting costs annually.

The new light bulb standards are similar to government-enacted standards regulating vehicle fuel efficiency—which first took effect in 1975—and since 1980, the U.S. Big Three automakers have increased their fleets' average fuel efficiency by 4.1 miles per gallon, according to federal statistics. Likewise, 1980s efficiency standards on refrigerators resulted in new models that today consume about a third of the energy they did in the mid-1970s.

The new rules require light bulb packaging to describe the light value and energy requirements of bulbs of all kinds, except the 100-watt incandescents.

It's still OK to buy and sell a light bulb of any kind that delivers the light of a 100-watt incandescent bulb, as long as it draws 72 watts or less. Also, in case you're interested, the old 100-watt incandescent bulbs still on store shelves can continue to be sold until they run out.

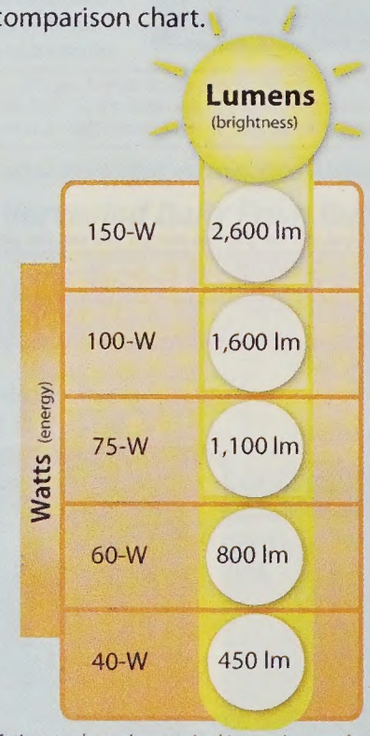
A flurry of opposition to the efficiency standard arose during the second half of 2011 when some people—including influential members of Congress and talk radio personalities—decried it as unnecessary government regulation and intrusion into the lives of the American marketplace and households. In fact, as Congress scurried to pass a spending bill in mid-December, House Republicans succeeded in tacking on a provision that prevents the Department of Energy (DOE) from enforcing the 100-watt efficiency standard until October of this year.

For practical purposes, the mandated delay in enforcement will have little or no effect. The American Lighting Association in January said that light bulb manufacturers for four years have been gearing up for the change, and that Americans will quickly see new, more efficient bulbs on store shelves, including incandescent bulbs.

A statement from the National Resources Defense Council, which supported the efficiency measure, said,

What to Look for When Purchasing Lightbulbs

Instead of shopping for watts, look for lumens. Here's a helpful comparison chart.



Estimates based on typical incandescent bulbs.
Source: U.S. Federal Trade Commission

"Incandescent light bulbs are not going away due to the standard, they are just getting better."

Electric co-ops consistently point out to their consumer-members that there are energy-saving alternatives to the incandescent bulb. Alternatives include compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), which use about 75 percent less energy and last six times longer than equivalent incandescent bulbs. Although they cost more up front, CFLs typically pay for themselves in electricity savings in about six months, according to DOE. Increasingly, CFLs are available in styles that resemble traditional bulbs and can work with dimmers and 3-way switches. While they do contain a minute amount of mercury, the mercury is not an issue unless CFLs break. Co-ops inform members how to clean up a broken bulb and dispose of spent ones. Also, light-emitting diode bulbs (LEDs), as were seen in many Christmas light displays this season, are fast coming onto the market and use 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than equivalent incandescents.

What about the heat?

Last fall, Wake EMC member Steve Barrow of Kittrell worried that a phase-out of traditional 100-watt bulbs would affect his use of them to keep water pipes from freezing and to warm his chicken coop. (As much as 90 percent of the energy released by incandescent bulbs is in the form of heat.) As it happens, the new light bulb standards exempt certain kinds of bulbs which could be used for heating. According to DOE, exemptions include the following lamps: appliance, black light, bug, infrared, left-hand thread, marine, plant light, reflector and 3-way incandescent.

For more information about your options in light bulbs, contact your electric cooperative or visit www.energysavers.gov.

Keep more bees

I would like to encourage people to do a little beekeeping. Do you know just how important it is to our small communities? There aren't enough bees to pollinate our farms.

I started beekeeping last year and have learned so much from the few beekeepers we still have. Dedicated people work together to raise bees. The Lincoln County Beekeepers is a great group of people to get to know. They help each other. I encourage you to check out beekeeping as a fun thing to do as a family and an important thing for our communities.

Laurie Beal, Lincolnton

My Blackie

The article "Blackie" brought many fond memories [January 2012]. In the late 1950s I too had a pet crow named Blackie. It began when I would feed him as he sat on our back porch rail. He would follow me to the school bus stop and would be back to meet me getting off the bus. He would hang around our yard, coming and going, waiting for food. Then one day: no Blackie. I later learned the boy in the house behind ours was given a BB gun and shot him.

I was so heartbroken and felt so bad for the bird who did no harm. There's a lesson in this. Can you figure it out?

Fran Calabrese Schweiber, Locust, Union Power Cooperative

Making pennies

Back in The Day, copper was used around nails in order to prevent buildings from leaking. My brother Bill used copper around nails for his pig houses in order to keep water out. One day, my nephew Earl showed me how to make pennies, using the copper around the nails on Bill's pig houses. The two of us took all the copper from Bill's pig houses. I don't know if Earl got spanked for it, but I do know that I did. My daddy put my head between his legs, and I got the worse spanking I ever had. Needless to say, I never made any more pennies.

June Smisor, Tryon, Rutherford EMC

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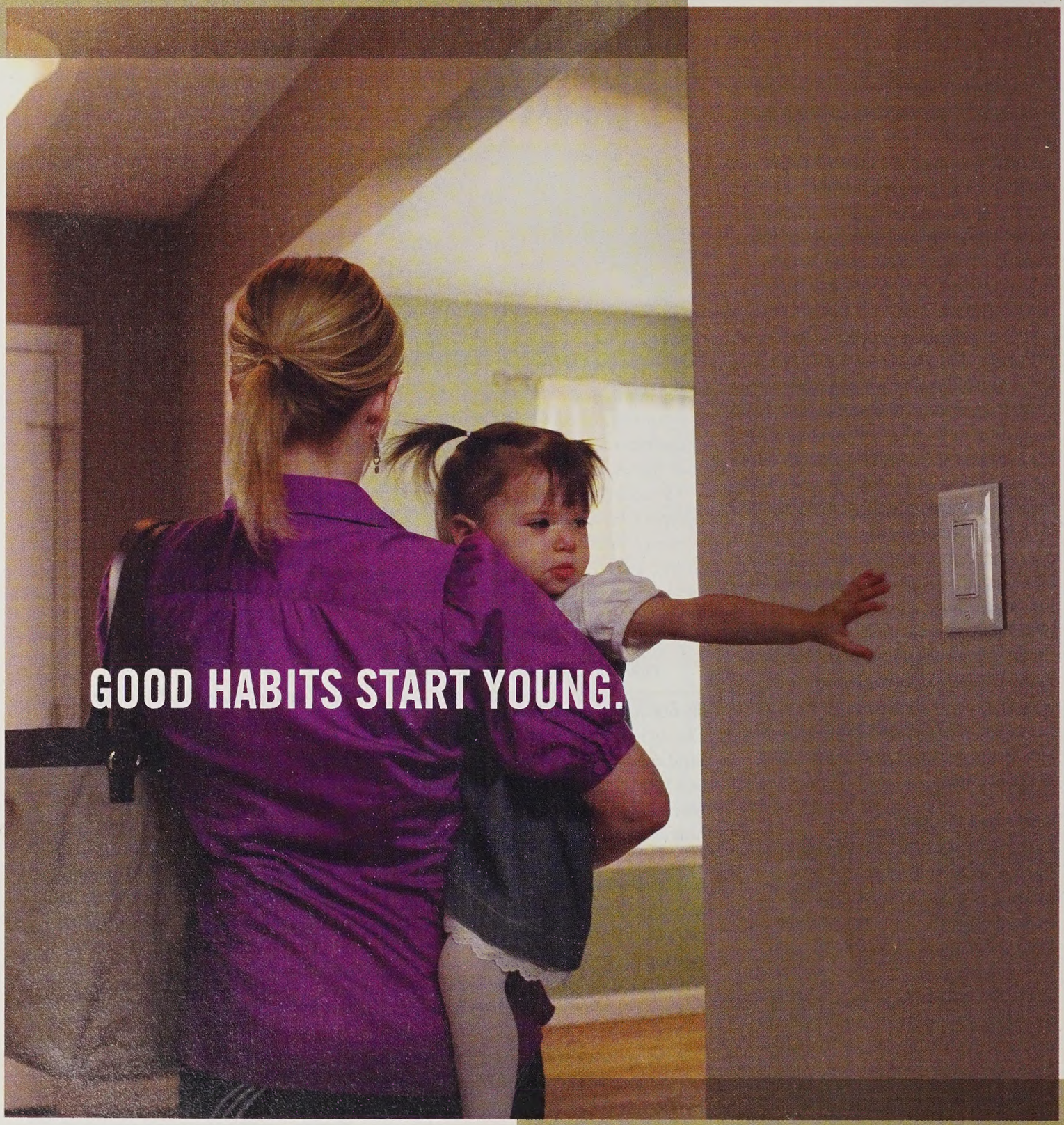

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Tankless water heaters: a good deal?

Tankless water heaters offer the promise of hot water on demand, but electric co-ops are concerned about the impact their use might have on electricity demand during peak usage periods. Tankless water heaters can ratchet up the demand for electricity, particularly during peak usage hours when people are bathing or doing laundry, for example. And co-ops that buy power wholesale can face higher wholesale rates during peak demand times.

Whole-house versions can contain up to four 7,000-watt elements, which can consume substantially more energy than the two 4.5-kilowatt elements found in the electric water heaters used by many consumers.

Also, the cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining a tankless heater may outweigh their modest energy savings.

"Tankless water heaters are pretty popular in Europe and in some Asian countries, but we're beginning to see them advertised more in the United States," said Brian Sloboda, a program manager at NRECA's Cooperative Research Network.

In most cases, there is a need to upgrade electrical systems to handle their load, as well as limitations on their ability to provide continuous supplies of hot water simultaneously for different needs.

Energy Efficiency *quick tip*

Tankless water heaters generally aren't as energy efficient as well-kept traditional models. Insulation, temperature setback, timers, and heat traps can all lower energy costs with tank water heaters.

It is not realistic to expect unlimited supplies of hot water from tankless heaters, Sloboda said, adding that the tankless models can't match the 50-gallon to 80-gallon reserve in a traditional water heater tank. "If someone is taking a shower and someone else is using the kitchen sink or washing clothes, someone is going to be unhappy," he said.

In some areas, electric utilities charge premiums for peak-time power demand. A tankless water heater running during that period could have a hefty effect on a consumer's bill.

—Electric Co-op Today

Energy Star homes sell better

A Vance County news blog reported in December that Energy Star homes sell faster and at a higher price per square foot compared to conventional homes. The story by Phil Hart in the blog Home in Henderson cited a study by the North Carolina Energy Efficiency Alliance (NCEEA). The study analyzed data for new homes built in 2010 in a five-county area around the Raleigh-Durham region. The study showed that the Energy Star label brings significant added value to homes beyond the 15 to 30 percent savings on monthly utility bills.

The study compared Energy Star homes to similar code-built homes. Appraisal values were provided by a third-party N.C. licensed appraiser. Energy Star sold for $2.99 more per square foot and up to 89 days faster than conventional homes.

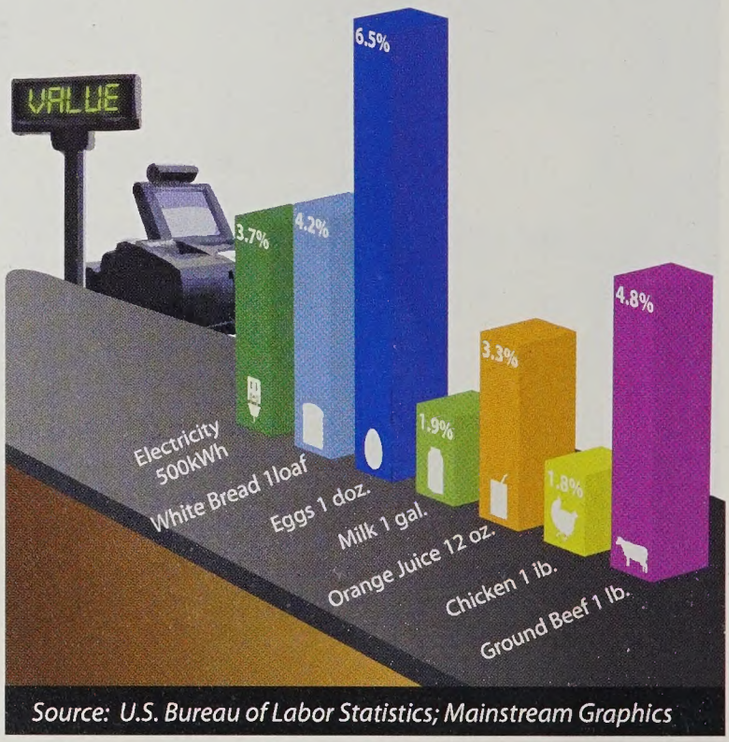
An Energy Star qualification does add upfront cost to a home, but savings for the builder and homeowner seem to exceed the initial investment. Energy Star homes require third-party verification to assure buyers they are getting a more comfortable home with lower operating costs due to better insulation, advanced framing, air sealing, high performance windows, and more efficient lighting and appliances that meet the Energy Star program requirements.

The executive summary from this study, as well as the full report, can be found on the website www.ncenergystar.org. The North Carolina Energy Efficiency Alliance is a statewide organization based at Appalachian State University in Boone.

"Check out" the value of electricity!

Next time you're at the grocery store, think about the way prices for bread, eggs, and other consumer goods have risen over the years. Electricity remains a value!

Average annual price increase between 2000-2010:



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Mainstream Graphics

Try This!

How manufactured homes can leak energy, and what you can do about it

By Brian Sloboda

Manufactured homes, sometimes dubbed mobile homes, often log higher energy bills than traditional wood-frame or modular homes. Manufactured homes come as singlewides, doublewides and triplewides. Doublewides and triplewides require a crossover duct to provide air flow between the sections—a major culprit in air leaks that mean wasted energy. Also, homes that sit on jack stands or blocks allow air to flow underneath.

But residents can take steps to help manage energy costs and increase comfort. It may take a couple of weekends and even a few hundred dollars, but basic repairs can yield significant savings in the long run. Savings of up to 50 percent have been reported in manufactured homes that have been properly sealed and had old electric furnaces replaced with new electric heat pumps.

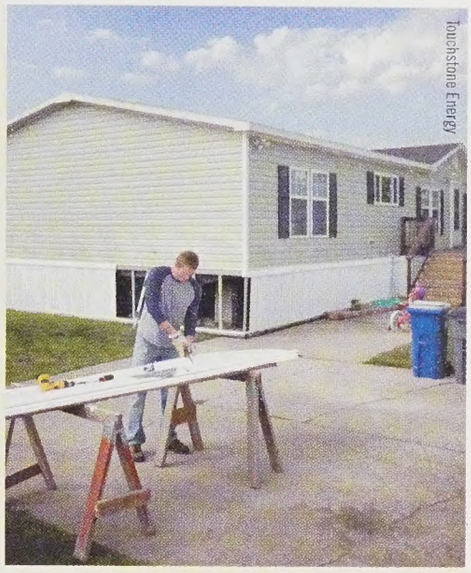
Here are the most common culprits of energy loss and ways to remedy them:

Belly board problems—In most manufactured homes, the belly board holds the insulation in place under the floor and serves as a vapor barrier. Plumbing that runs under the floor is on the warm side of the insulation to keep it from freezing in winter. However, the belly board can be damaged by animals or deteriorate over time, allowing the floor insulation to become moisture laden or to simply fall out, exposing ductwork and dramatically increasing energy losses. Often there is also long-term water damage from leaky pipes, toilets and showers that has compromised floor, insulation and belly board integrity. These problems must be addressed prior to basic weatherization. Replacing the belly board and repairing leaky plumbing should be the first thing on your "to do" list.

Air leakage/infiltration—Infiltration of excessive outside air can be a major problem. Specific problems include deteriorated weather stripping; gaps in the "marriage wall" that joins multiple units making up the home; holes in the ends of ducts; gaps around wall registers and behind washers and dryers; and unsealed backing to the electrical panel. Addressing leakage is a dirty job and requires crawling under the home and into the attic. Gaps can be filled with weather-stripping and insulation.

Crossover ducts—Sealing the ducts that run under the sections making up your mobile home will result in tremendous energy savings and increased comfort. Crossover ducts are often made of flexible tubing and are therefore prone to collapse and are easy for animals to chew or claw into. Crossover ducts made of thin sheet metal can leak air heated or cooled air, which is what happens when ductwork connections are made with duct tape. Repairs are generally easy, using either special duct sealant or metal tape found at most home improvement stores.

Lack of insulation—Insulation levels and associated R-values in walls, floors and ceilings in manufactured homes can be woefully inadequate. If it is easily accessible, adding additional insulation to ceiling and floors will help. However, avoid major renovations, often not justified, just to add insulation.



Touchstone Energy

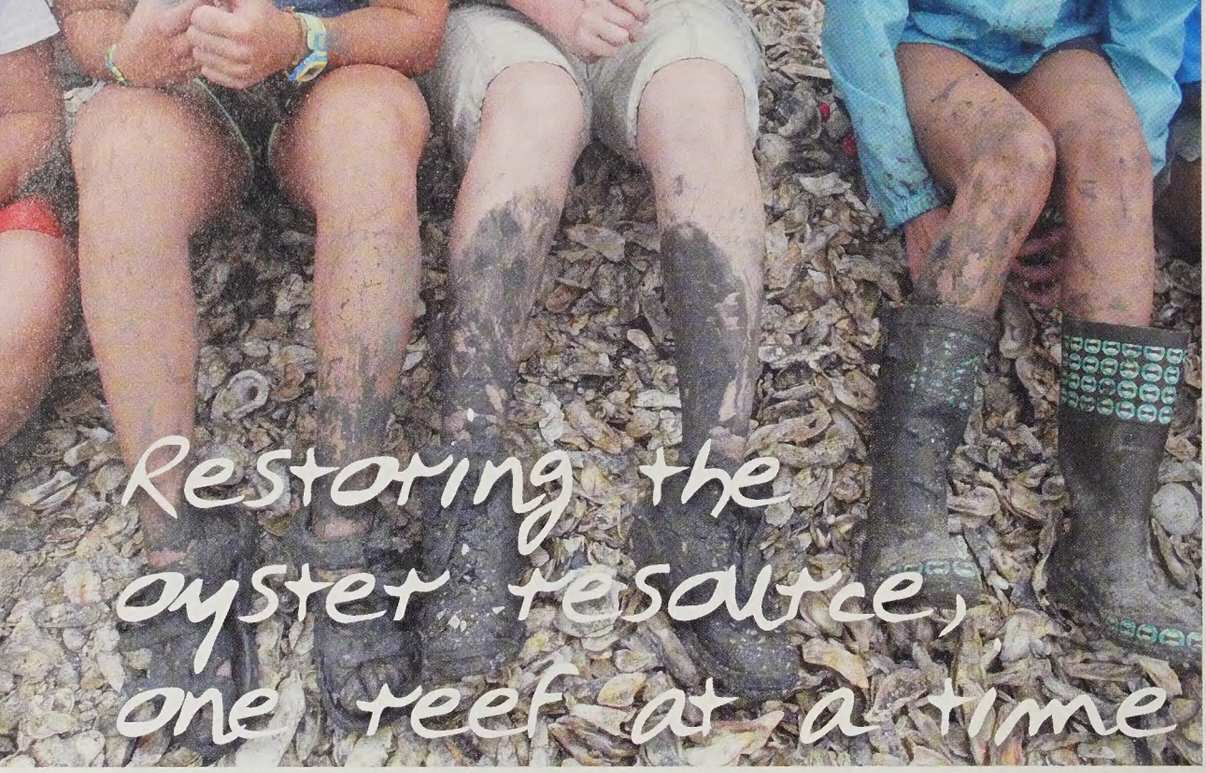
Sealing your manufactured home requires an investment of money and time but can yield big energy savings in the long run.

Uninsulated ductwork—Wrapping your ductwork leads to energy savings. Find insulation specifically made for ductwork at hardware stores.

Single-glazed windows and uninsulated doors—Most manufactured homes come with single-glazed windows and uninsulated doors. Replacing the windows with double- or triple-glazed windows or adding storm windows will help to make the home more comfortable. An insulated door will also help. However, these solutions can be very expensive. At a minimum, you should add weather stripping to doors and windows. Also, a window film kit is a cheap and easy-to-install upgrade that will help keep winter winds at bay.

Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Can you help others save energy?
Send your conservation ideas or questions to us: P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611, or E-mail: editor@carolinacountry.com



Restoring the oyster resource, one reef at a time

Story and photos by Hannah Miller

For North Carolinians, one of the pleasures of the chilly months is to sit down before a plateful of oysters straight from our coastal waters. At Carteret County's T &W Oyster Bar, which owner Earl Taylor says is on NC Hwy. 58 "out in the middle of the county in no man's land," they go through 60 bushels a week.

"We start shucking as hard as we can, and they start pigging out," says Taylor, a member of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative. "It's a nice-looking sight in here when I've got 40-something seats and a person on each one of them. We're rocking and a-rolling."

For many years, the forgotten ingredient in all this chowing down was the oyster shell. Spiny and rough-edged, it was a mottled black and gray lump that ended up in garbage dumps, chicken feed and driveways.

In the last decade, however, many of those North Carolinians have been collecting the shells to go into oyster reefs to grow more oysters. And much of the growing is going on in areas served by the state's coastal electric cooperatives. The effort is led by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Several environmental groups and individual volunteers also help return the shells to the state's estuaries.

Oyster larvae float with the tides until they find a hard surface to attach to, and old shells are their favorite spot for launching into adulthood. "When we see those little spat (young oysters), we're so excited," says Allie Sheffield, a member of Jones-Onslow EMC and, as director of environmental advocacy group PenderWatch, an avid recycler. "We think they're beautiful."

They will grow into adult oysters with the ability to filter 25 to 50 gallons of water a day of sediment and other foreign materials.

Almost immediately after the shells have been dumped overboard by DMF barges, "fish and crabs flock to them. That's a hiding place for them," says biologist supervisor Clay Caroon, a member of Tideland EMC who is in charge of DMF reef-building. "As the oysters grow, that creates more crevices, more cracks, more hiding spaces," he says. "It also creates jobs."

Most of the shells go into areas where they're hand-harvested or collected with tongs. "These fishermen take their harvest to market," Caroon says, "the market sells them to restaurants, the restaurants sell them to a customer."

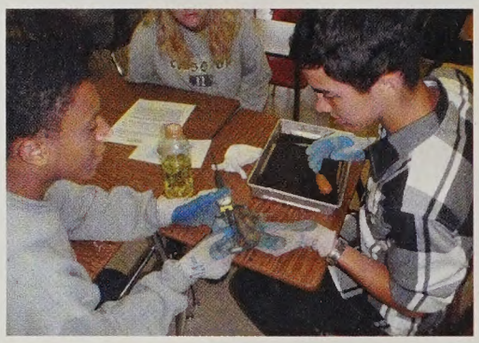
Earl Taylor at T & W Oyster Bar says he's already buying oysters from reefs built with recycled shells. "It might be the best government program I've seen or know of."

Recycling shells, building reefs

For years, the DMF has been building reefs from Dare County in the north to Brunswick County in the south, mostly using purchased shells. North Carolina's commercial oyster harvest has been gradually increasing, and Caroon gives part of the credit to the 25 to 40 reefs built a year.

Shell recycling, now under the direction of coordinator Sabrina Varnam, began in 2003. In the years since, dedicated volunteers at restaurants, oyster roasts, public and private waste collection services and family dinner tables have given the DMF 133,766 bushels. That's enough, at one square yard per bushel, to cover an area nearly the size of 21 football fields.

Collections, which are helped along by a state law banning disposal in landfills and a state tax credit of $1 per bushel for recyclers, have leveled off at about 20,000–25,000 a year, says Caroon. The DMF stockpiles them



Students at Dixon High, a member of Jones-Onslow EMC, measure an oyster before dissecting it. (Photo courtesy of NCCF)

and uses varying amounts per year: in 2010 they were 6 percent of shells used, in 2009 18 percent.

Even inland restaurants take part, like Squid's Restaurant and Oyster Bar and its sister restaurants in the Chapel Hill Restaurant Group. "We really believe that we live in a world of limited resources," says partner Greg Overbeck. Before Orange County's landfill started setting aside a spot for shell recycling, he took them to a seafood dealer in Carrboro, who delivered them to DMF on his buying trips to the coast.

The next generation

Caroon, a fan of recycling, says he'd rather have the shells in the state's waterways than in landfills and driveways. But to keep them headed there, restaurants and other recyclers are going to have to take a more active role in consolidating loads. Recent state budget cuts have left only enough money for limited pickup, and no money for expansion, he says. "It's going to take some creative thinking and some good coordination."

That's just what a teacher and her students at Lakewood High School in Sampson County have been exhibiting. Stephanie Grady, a member of South River EMC, is passionate about the environment, and when she took her students to a Varnam presentation on recycling, "My kids saw it and said that was something they wanted to do."

Using material donated last year by Lowe's Home Improvement and Waste Industries, Inc., they built a 500- bushel bin to hold consolidated loads at the

Phoebe Hood, a retired nurse practitioner in Hampstead, carries shells for a PenderWatch reef.

Sampson County regional landfill. One Saturday each month, she and the students empty two smaller containers they've set out and truck their contents to the wooden bin, which accepts other contributions from the county's residents and is emptied by the state in the spring. Students were so proud of their bin that they asked to build another, she says. "If we can find another spot or if another county wants to do it, we'll go build a bin for them."

In Pender County, the environmental advocacy group PenderWatch involves volunteers of all ages in collecting and bagging recycled oysters, then building reefs with them at the mouth of a river near the Inland Waterway. They started when they discovered there were no plans for DMF reefs in the area, and now, Sheffield says, moms and kids and seniors sign up.

Coastal restoration efforts by the N.C. Coastal Federation include an Oysters in the Classroom program at six schools in Carteret, Craven, New Hanover and Onslow counties. Students learn about oysters by dissecting them. After in-class instruction, they bag shells, some of them the recycled variety from DMF, and join in the federation's reef-building and reef-monitoring efforts.

Dixon High School teacher Gregory Batts, a member of Jones-Onslow EMC, laughs that he's lived near the coast all his life but never before realized that an oyster has a heart and an esophagus.

A couple of Dixon students, brothers Devin Hewitt, 15, and Dustin Hewitt, 14, learned recycling early from their father, Tony, a member of Jones-Onslow EMC. He's lived near Alligator Bay in Sneads Ferry for 11 years, and, he says, "I watched that bay grow from full of oysters to really not a lot."

Many of their neighbors are part-time residents who don't know how to collect oysters, the boys say, so they do it for them, asking customers to return the empties for recycling. "I walk the bank, pull my little boat behind me and throw them in the boat," Devin says.

"He'll go get the oysters and bring them back, and I'll cull them," says his brother Dustin. "I'll break the old shells off of them, throw them back in the bay to reproduce." Then they toss in customers' empties.

They're not alone in their interest, says Batts. "A lot of the kids enjoy taking care of the water."

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer who works out of Charlotte.

To learn more

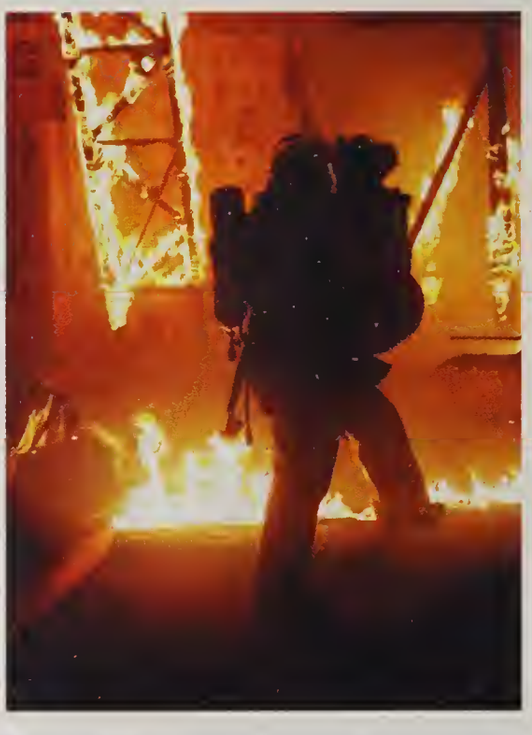
The Division of Marine Fisheries Oyster Shell Recycling Program
http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/oyster-shell-recycling-program

The N.C. Coastal Federation
www.nccoast.org

PenderWatch
www.penderwatch.org

This PenderWatch reef is ready to start serving as a home for young oysters.

Thanks to those who care about the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center



North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives hosted a golf tournament fundraiser in October, 2011 and raised $105,867 for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center and its Burn Prevention programs. The cooperatives have donated more than $1,000,000 to the Burn Center's fire prevention and educational programs over the past decade.

The Burn Center's programs seek to garner awareness about burn prevention and burn management and targets audiences such as emergency care personnel, fire departments, youth and senior citizens. Educational programs are delivered free of charge across the state. The Burn Center's outreach staff works to pass legislative initiatives to promote fire and burn safety and distributes safety tips to citizens statewide. With help from the electric cooperatives, the Burn Center is updating its facilities and expanding its services.

"North Carolina's electric cooperatives, our vendors and partners are pleased to support the Burn Center in reaching its goals of reducing the number of burns in our state through expanded burn prevention programs and, when a burn occurs, to provide the best possible care," said tournament chair Dale Lambert, CEO of Randolph EMC, Asheboro.

Listed here are the major donors to this fundraiser supporting burn prevention. The cooperatives are grateful to the other organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of this fundraiser.

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Time travel at the speed of a 1935 Speedster?

The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principles of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequaled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

The Stauer *1930s Dashtronic* deftly blends the modern functionality of a 21-jewel automatic movement and 3-ATM water resistance with the distinctive, retro look of a jumping display (not an actual jumping complication). The stainless steel 1 1/2" case is complemented with a black alligator-embossed leather band. The band is 9 1/2" long and will fit a 7–8 1/2" wrist.

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>>01>>

CAROLINA COUNTRY scenes

A gallery of your favorite photos

>>02>>

>>03>>

>>04>>

>>05>>

>>06>>

>>01>> Good Morning Son This is our youngest son in April 2006. He is saluting the sun as it rises at a special place in eastern North Carolina where a river flows into a creek. This is a quiet fishing village in Pamlico County. With a breeze flowing through the house, the sound of the laughing gulls and an occasional boat motor, we spend warm days enjoying the wildlife, fishing, catching crabs and making a big splash in the water. It is a treat when the dolphins swim by or an eagle darts down to catch a fish. It's a great place to read a good book, *enjoy* cooking and take a nap when the mood strikes. The children can entertain themselves by the water all day. They always expect cinnamon toast with breakfast and a rowdy game of "UNO" at night. If we are lucky, we have a feast of fresh, fried fish when the sun sets for the evening.

Donna Banks, Roseboro, South River EMC

>>02>> Going Home This large loggerhead turtle has been rehabilitated at the Karen Beasley Turtle Hospital on Topsail Island and was released in June 2011 to go home, back to the sea.

Lynn Wilson, Emerald Isle, Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

>>03>> Her Favorite Chicken Lana is enjoying a spring day with her favorite chicken. She is a country gal and loves to be outside. Lana and her brother, Nathan, enjoy raising chickens on their small farm in Sampson County.

Celeste Williford, Dunn, South River EMC

>>04>> Fresh and Clean After beautiful snow fell, we decided to go for a ride. The countryside was beautiful. Everything looked so fresh and clean. My husband, my son, my daughter-in-law, the two grandbabies and I enjoyed seeing this barn on that day. My son snapped the picture for us. It is definitely one of my favorite photos, other than those of my grandbabies, of course.

Angela Brooks, Dunn, South River EMC

>>05>> Camp Willow Run Sun A sunset over a dock at Camp Willow Run on Lake Gaston in Littleton.

Will Bratton, Littleton, Halifax EMC

>>06>> Their World Everyone's watching the parade. But Poppa and his great-grandson, David, are in their own little world. Poppa was a hardworking man, but he always laid down his tools and took time for children.

Jan Clark Pearson, Indian Trail, Union Power Cooperative

>>07>> Just Listening Our granddaughter, Bella Elizabeth Luther, is 2 and a great joy to all of us. Even on your worst day, her smile can make you forget. Bella loves to get your attention. On July 4, 2011, we were at the Southeast Old Threshers Reunion in Denton watching the tractor pull. My husband, J.D., was talking with some old friends, and Bella had lain down in a tractor wheel just listening to the conversation.

Cheryl Luther, Denton, Randolph EMC

>>08>> Casey's View My son, Casey Simmons, a 16-year-old at Randleman High, took this picture while out with his aunt one fall afternoon.

Melisa Staley Simmons, Sophia, Randolph EMC

>>09>> A Sunday Stroll Two little sisters sweetly join hands as they continue their Sunday afternoon stroll through this patch of puddles.

Rebecca Yarbrough, Mocksville, EnergyUnited

>>10>> The Mud Sling Some good, "clean" family fun at the Mud Sling fundraiser put on by the Glade Creek Volunteer Fire Dept.

Sandra L. Walker, Sparta, Blue Ridge Electric

>>11>> Reflections on Veterans On a Veterans Day visit to the Airborne & Special Operations Museum in Fayetteville, we were listening to a presentation about Missing in Action soldiers. I glanced at my teenage son and saw in the reflection of his sunglasses the flags representing lots of teenage sons, husbands and fathers who would not have an opportunity to go to a museum with their families. I saw a replica of the Vietnam Memorial with names of many others who can never tell their stories to their loved ones. I saw others like myself who can only salute and say a sincere "thank you" to all who willingly serve so that we might know the freedom of a celebration ceremony such as this one.

Lynda Russell, Thomasville, EnergyUnited

>>12>> Our Old Chevy in Walnut Cove My family and I love to just hop in the old Chevy and start driving. On this fall day we ended up in downtown Walnut Cove. I took this picture in front of the Just Plain Country Antique store.

Kristy Witten, East Bend, Surry-Yadkin EMC

>>11>>

>>12>>

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>>13>> This Is a Beach My son Kolden gets to know Wrightsville Beach.

Jennifer Oelenberger, Statesville, EnergyUnited

>>14>> A Path in the Woods We were taking our two dogs and our cat for a walk on the bike path in the woods behind our house.

Chris Howard, Wake Forest, Wake EMC

>>15>> Ellis and the Stunned Cardinal My 12-year-old son, Ellis, has always enjoyed getting up close and personal with nature. He loves to pick up anything: snakes, frogs, crawdads, lizards, bugs, bees. He even caught a hummingbird bare-handed. One Saturday morning, I was in the kitchen and heard a thump on a window. I looked out to see a female cardinal lying on our front porch. I called my son, who went out and picked up the stunned bird. He began to stroke it with his finger. The bird began to move but was still very dazed. When she seemed to be more alert, she perched on his finger. I ran to grab my camera. My son held the bird for several minutes, stroking her head, and she began to peck at his finger. She then flew off to a nearby tree. This was an experience that my son and I will not soon forget.

Tammy Baucom, Monroe, Union Power Cooperative

>>16>> Gold in God's Paradise Several years ago while living a busy and hectic life near the city, my family began a search to find a home in the country. We searched far and wide in western North Carolina and finally found a beautiful and quiet little farm tucked away in the mountains, with a babbling brook, animals and the abundance of nature. I love sitting on our porch observing the scenery. One raining day, the sun came out, and I ran to the porch hoping to see a rainbow. I was blessed with this spectacular double-rainbow. Although we are often still very busy, we live in God's paradise. I now know what it means to see gold at the end of the rainbow.

Denise Baron, Bostic, Rutherford EMC

>>17>> Freshly Plowed Ashton is watching J.R. walk in the freshly plowed field.

Zach Hutto, Elizabeth City, Albemarle EMC

>>18>> Historic Liberty Hall This is a Civil War re-enactor at historic Liberty Hall in Kenansville.

Bryan Pinkey, Kenansville, Tri-County EMC

>>16>>

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>>19>> Outer Banks Summer Sunrise This was the first official sunrise of summer 2011 at Kill Devil Hills on North Carolina's Outer Banks. I got up real early to get into position, and it paid off.

Joel Woodruff, Granite Falls, Blue Ridge Electric

>>20>> Horse Farm Photo A morning photo from a horse farm on Mitchell Mill Rd. near Raleigh.

Rich Millward, Youngsville, Wake EMC

>>21>> *And Then a Frog Emerged* I live in the Prospect Hill section of Caswell County. Panther Creek flows through the back end of my property. I am captivated by the diversity of the creek, with its twists and bends and ever-changing water levels that reveal and camouflage the habitats of small wildlife. During the drought this past summer, the creek ran completely dry, with the exception of isolated puddles that became a refuge for turtles, frogs and minnows. In one of these puddles I observed a cluster of tadpoles, struggling to reach maturity before their haven completely evaporated. During one of my walks in August, I was delighted to find a newly emerged frog (about the size of a pinky nail) floating on a leaf.

Phil Cohen, Prospect Hill, Piedmont EMC

>>See more favorite photos at www.carolinacountry.com

>>21>>

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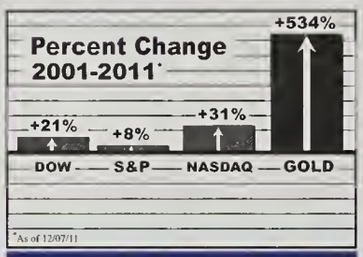

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Electric safety tips for rural homeowners

If you're a rural homeowner who maintains a few acres beyond city limits, there are important safety tips that can make your use of electricity safer and more efficient. While electricity is our safest form of energy, homeowners should take responsibility for recognizing unsafe wiring and other hazardous conditions. Here are a few guidelines that can save lives, property and money.

If you don't have a GFCI, get one

A ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) can protect you from a fatal shock. Unlike fuses or circuit breakers that depend on heavy overloads and short circuits to function, GFCI's sense even small electrical faults and instantly cut off power before people or equipment can be hurt.

GFCIs come in several forms. Some are designed to replace standard wall outlets, others are portable units built into an extension cord for use with hand tools. The National Electrical Code requires that GFCIs be installed in garages, bathrooms and on outdoor receptacles for new homes or additions. Particularly with outdoor electric use, a GFCI can be a lifesaver. With your feet on Mother Earth, you are a better grounding path for fault current. Also, wet outdoor areas add risk when operating hand tools, power washers, hedge clippers and lawn trimmers. Around pools, use GFCIs with recirculating pumps, on lighting circuits and all receptacles within 20 feet of the pool.

Where can you buy ground-fault circuit interrupters? Look for them at most hardware stores, home centers and electrical supply outlets.

Inspect the wiring in outbuildings

If you have a detached shop, storage building or livestock barn, specific wiring materials and methods are needed to prevent premature corrosion and system failure. Residential-type fixtures are not designed for these buildings, which often have dusty or moist conditions. Receptacle outlets, switches and light fixtures that are designed for homes may work for the first few years, but then they become a ticking time bomb waiting to fail. An electrician with experience in wiring barns will know the type of enclosed corrosion-resistant fixtures to use.

Another resource is the Agricultural Wiring Handbook, containing 100-plus pages for planning electrical wiring on farms. It is a great reference that covers barns, shops, grain/feed storage areas and related farm applications. A second reference, Electrical Wiring for Livestock and Poultry Structures, is specifically targeted to enclosed poultry, swine and dairy buildings. This 18-page book explains (and illustrates) the wiring required by the National Electrical Code, and includes a detailed list of approved wiring components, lighting and electrical boxes.

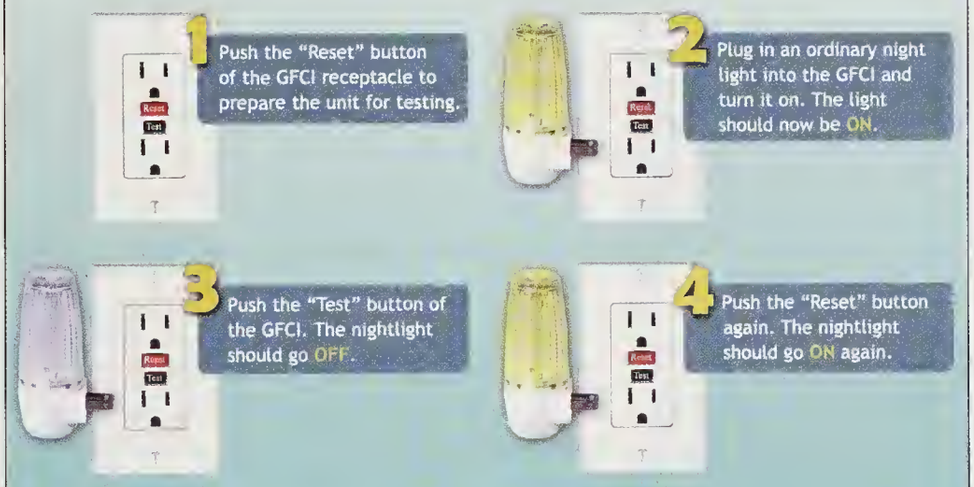
Your electrical system deserves just as much attention as your machinery or other equipment. A quick inspection could save you from a costly fire, or possible injury to family members. Call your electric cooperative for additional assistance.

Source: The Rural Electricity Resource Council, a nonprofit association that delivers information and technical assistance on the efficient use of energy, with an emphasis on rural applications. www.rerc.org

How to test electrical outlets

Since the 1970s ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) have saved thousands of lives, helping cut the number of home electrocutions in half. The safety devices prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs from the amount returning. The safety devices should be used in any indoor or outdoor area where water may come into contact with electrical products.

GFCIs should be tested once a month to make sure they're working properly. To test a device, follow these four steps:


1
Push the "Reset" button of the GFCI receptacle to prepare the unit for testing.
2
Plug in an ordinary night light into the GFCI and turn it on. The light should now be ON.
3
Push the "Test" button of the GFCI. The nightlight should go OFF.
4
Push the "Reset" button again. The nightlight should go ON again.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

Adding insulation in your attic can lower your power bill

Is there enough insulation in your attic? By adding insulation, you can improve your home's energy efficiency and save money on your electric bills.

With adequate attic insulation, your home's heating/cooling system will operate more efficiently. It will keep you cooler in the summer and warmer in winter—and it will keep more money in your wallet. Visit www.TogetherWeSave.com to see how adding insulation to your attic can save you $240 a year.

Older homes tend to have less attic insulation than newer ones. An energy audit can indicate whether additional insulation is needed.

Before adding insulation to your attic, determine how much insulation is already installed, what kind it is and how thick it is. Next, you'll need to know the R-value—which indicates the insulation's resistance to heat—of existing attic insulation. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. Once you know the R-value, you can determine how much insulation to add by using the U.S. Department of Energy's Zip Code Insulation Calculator at www.ornl.gov.

Now you're ready to decide what kind of insulation to install: loose-fill or blanket (batt and roll) insulation. Loose-fill insulation consists of small particles of fiber, foam or other materials. Blanket insulation, the most common and widely available type of insulation, comes in the form of batts and rolls made from mineral wool, plastic fibers and natural fibers. Loose-fill insulation is usually less expensive to install than batt insulation. And when installed properly, loose-fill insulation can provide better coverage.

For other tips on how to save energy and money, visit www.energysavers.gov or www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Practicing garage door safety is an open and shut case

What weighs 600 pounds, deters intruders and goes up or down at the push of a button? It's your automatic garage door, the largest moving piece of equipment in many homes.

Automatic garage doors may be a routine part of leaving and arriving home, but you should be aware of the potential for injury. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., recommends these safety tips:

- Always keep automatic garage doors fully open or fully closed. Some folks may leave a small opening at the bottom for pets to get in and out for food or shade. But a small opening could also be an invitation for a child to try to crawl through and get stuck. Another push of the button could send the heavy door down—causing injury—instead of bringing the door up when trying to free anyone stuck underneath. If you encounter someone stuck in an automatic door, don't push the button on the garage opener—call your local fire department.
- Read instructions on how to operate and maintain your garage door properly. Check your automatic door monthly to be sure safety precautions are working. Many garage doors boast a safety feature that triggers an automatic reversal if anything is encountered while closing. To check, place a 1.5-inch object (like a flat 2-by-4) in the path of the door to make sure the door correctly reverses when contact is made. Instructions should also advise on maintaining a properly balanced door. Call a qualified repair company for service or maintenance.
- Do not allow children to operate a garage door. It may seem harmless to allow children to push the garage opener. But activating heavy equipment should be taken seriously.
- Avoid walking under a door that is opening or closing. You never know when a malfunction may take place. Steer clear of a moving door.
- Know when and how to use the emergency release. You'll find a cord with a handle hanging along the track of your garage door. Always use caution when using this release, and only use it when the door is fully closed.

Including children in finance discussions about vacations and expensive toys helps them understand about saving money.

Use everyday moments to teach kids about money

When a child questions a parent's refusal to buy a toy, the parent has the perfect opportunity to teach a money lesson about making choices.

From the time children drop their first few coins into a piggy bank, they are ready to learn about setting savings goals and making smart spending decisions. While kids may struggle with giving up a candy bar today to save for a video game purchase next month, the lesson of saving becomes directly applicable to them.

But the bite of inflation? The wisdom of diversifying savings? Can a third grader really understand these concepts?

The experts say yes, and the sooner parents start imparting these lessons, the more effective they will be in helping children grow into financially responsible young adults. The trick is to take advantage of teachable "money moments" that happen every day—such as when you go to the bank or the grocery store—to help children understand complex concepts in kid-friendly terms.

When a child questions a parent's refusal to buy a toy, the parent has the perfect opportunity to teach a money lesson about making choices. He or she can explain that purchasing that specific toy means there is less money to be used for future purchases, such as buying a bicycle or a video game the child has on his wish list.

Another example would be if a son or daughter asks why the family can't fly instead of driving a great distance for the family vacation. This question presents an opportunity to explain spending tradeoffs the daughter or son can understand. For example, the amount required for airline tickets may mean the vacation budget can't allow for swimming with dolphins or a visit to the amusement park.

"If children are included in family financial discussions, such as planning for a fun vacation or purchasing a high-cost toy, then parents can begin to place daily spending decisions in a context their child will understand," says Stuart Ritter, CFP, a family financial expert with T. Rowe Price, and father of three. "Teaching children to set savings goals and make decisions about money that align with those goals is much easier when the discussion is concrete rather than abstract."

Inflation and diversification may be more difficult for children to grasp. In fact, some adults may have trouble defining these concepts. Simple explanations may work, such as explaining that college will cost a lot more several years from today, which means you save and invest differently for that goal in contrast to saving six months for a smaller item, such as a skateboard.

Learning through games

A complementary approach is to introduce children to games that teach basic money lessons. One example is the game "The Great Piggy Bank Adventure" at www.GreatPiggyBankAdventure.com, a free online board game that conveys basic financial concepts in a way that is fun and easy for kids to understand.

To extend the lessons from the game, parents can also download a free "Journey to Your Dream Goal" activity book from www.FamilyFinancialHub.com. Puzzles, games, and tricky challenges help guide kids through the process of making smart financial decisions.

—Family Features.com

Hearts at risk: understanding basics of blood pressure

Healthy hearts face risks from many different factors: high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and secondhand smoke, among others. But another common—and often misunderstood—risk factor is high blood pressure.

One in three Americans suffers from high blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). With February designated as American Heart Month, now is a great time to understand more about this condition.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio: 118/75 mm Hg. The top number, systolic, measures pressure in the arteries when a heart beats and the heart muscle contracts. The bottom number, diastolic, measures pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle rests between beats and refills with blood).

The AHA lists five stages of blood pressure:

- **Normal:** Systolic less than 120 and diastolic less than 80
- **Prehypertension:** Systolic between 120–139 or diastolic between 80–89
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 1:** Systolic between 140–159 or diastolic between 90–99
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 2:** Systolic 160 and higher or diastolic 100 or higher
- **Hypertensive Crisis** (emergency care needed): Systolic 180 and higher or diastolic 110 or higher

How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Health care providers want an accurate picture of blood pressure to chart what happens over time. Starting at age 20, AHA recommends a blood pressure screening at least once every two years.

If a patient's blood pressure reading comes in higher than normal, a doctor may take several readings over time and/or have the patient monitor blood pressure levels at home before diagnosing high blood pressure.

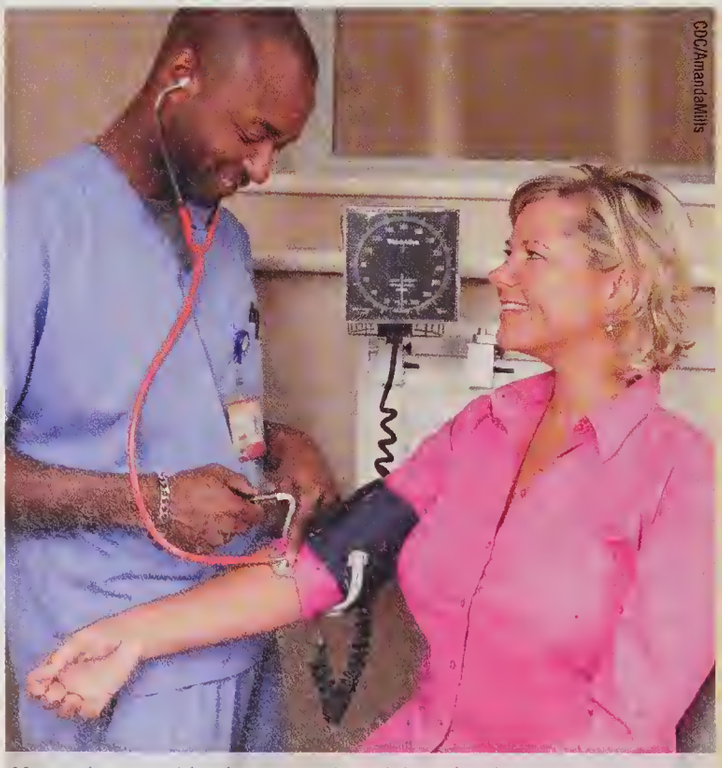
A single high reading does not necessarily translate to high blood pressure. However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above (systolic 140 or above OR diastolic 90 or above) over time, a doctor will likely begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring blood pressure, a patient notes a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm HG or higher, the patient should wait a few minutes and try again. If the reading remains at or above that level, a patient should seek immediate emergency medical treatment for a hypertensive crisis.

Which number is more important?

Of course both numbers are important, but typically more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most cases, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age because of increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

To learn more, visit www.heart.org.



Measuring your blood pressure is quick and painless.

Preventing heart disease

Heart disease, including stroke, is the leading cause of death for men and women in this country. You are at higher risk of heart disease if you are:

- A woman age 55 or older
- A man age 45 or older
- Or a person with a family history of early heart disease

To keep your heart healthy:

- Watch your weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.
- Get active and eat healthy.
- Consult your doctor about taking aspirin every day if you are a man over the age of 45 or a woman over 55.
- Manage stress.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Health Information Center

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by Feb. 8 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our March issue, will receive $25.

January winner

The January picture by Rebecca Fowler of Atkinson is near West Pender Middle School, Pender County, on Hwy. 53 between Wards Corner and Atkinson. The field is owned by Thomas Kelly, whose wife, Brenda, told us that, "This was one of his projects, and he adds on to it as the notion strikes him. The horse rearing up has been a dream of his since he was very young. It seemed natural to add a mama and little foal. The bear and dogs came later." The winning answer, chosen at random from all the correct entries, was from Gene Young of Burgaw, a member of Four County EMC.

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I Remember...

This is my dad, Albert White, with our family cow Blossie.

My first milking lesson

When I was young, my dad decided I should learn to milk our family cow, Blossie. I didn't even like to *drink* milk, so I wasn't interested. But Daddy thought I should know how.

My stomach was in knots that morning of my first milking lesson. Daddy said, "Don't scare her." How could I scare her? She was the one scaring me! When I sat down for my first try, Blossie gave me a mean look with her enormous brown eyes and slapped me in the face with her tail. That did it. I was ready to quit, but Daddy insisted I continue.

The lesson became worse as the udder felt slimy and wormy. Ugh! I squeezed and pulled down as Daddy said, but not a drop came out. I couldn't concentrate on anything but her tail that might slap me again at any time.

I never did learn to milk. Had I known that milk would cost $4 a gallon in later years, I might have tried harder. My husband kids me and says he thought all farm girls knew how to milk a cow. I guess not!

Opalene (Opie) McKeaver, Dobson, Surry-Yadkin EMC

Snowbound mountain people

In 1960, I was a teenager growing up in Watauga County. Around the middle of February a series of snowstorms began to occur on a weekly basis, almost always happening on the same day of the week. The snow began to accumulate and pile up because there wasn't any place to put it. Schools operated sporadically, missing the better part of six weeks.

During this siege, National Guard personnel and helicopters were brought in to deliver food, medicine and hay to people in need. The baseball field at Appalachian State University was used as the landing site. I talked my dad, Max Hagaman, into taking us to Boone to see the helicopters in action. Imagine our surprise when we arrived and found no place to park. It seemed that everyone with a vehicle had come to Boone to see the helicopters.

What I learned that winter was that most of these hardy mountain people neither needed nor wanted government assistance. Although they might be snowbound, they were happy, warm and well fed. My grandmother said it best: "They may drop food here, but it won't be cooked in my pots."

Cecil Hagaman, Zionville, Blue Ridge EMC

The beautiful music

I grew up in the high country of Mitchell County. I was about 12 years old when we got electricity from French Broad EMC, so I remember well placing the battery-operated radio we had just so on the Hoosier cabinet. If you didn't place it just so, it didn't pick up anything, and at best, you sometimes had to lean down and place your ear on the radio to hear it.

One Saturday afternoon, I heard, faintly, the sound of classical music. I stood for a long time with my ear pressed against the radio. I was hooked! When the great day came and we finally had electricity (we couldn't stop saying "Blow out the light!") we bought an electric radio, and I was in heaven.

Now, many worlds later, as a board member of the Union Symphony Orchestra, I have the privilege of being involved in bringing the great classical music of the world to my region, serviced by Pee Dee EMC. I am especially gratified by the fact that the Union Symphony Youth Orchestra, 91 members strong and representing nine counties, is growing the great musicians of the future. And just think: I can hear this wonderful music every day without putting my ear to the radio.

Stella H. Baucom, Marshville, Pee Dee EMC

SEND US YOUR *Memories*

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Guidelines:

1. Approximately 200 words.
2. Digital photos must be at least 600kb or 1200 by 800 pixels.
3. No deadline, but only one entry per household per month.
4. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want yours returned.
5. We pay $50 for each one published in the magazine. We retain reprint rights.
6. Include your name, mailing address and the name of your electric cooperative.
7. **E-mail:** iremember@carolinacountry.com **Or by U.S. mail:** I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

y sister, Blondell Self (now Overcash), on the right, and I am on the left, amona "Ronnie" Self (now Stone).

Our day in the mountains

I remember my first sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the early 1940s. We lived in the Piedmont and had no car, but our neighbors the Kisers did. They invited us—Daddy, Mother, my older sister Blondie, and me—to drive with them to the mountains for the day.

The roads were all gravel, and our A-Model Ford seemed to be the only car on the road. At a fish hatchery, two friendly men in uniform showed us around and warned us to stay clear of several caged and threatening rattlesnakes. We walked onto a small swinging bridge over a clear mountain stream, and Mother pointed out speckled trout, just released from the hatchery and flashing in the water below. Daddy, a great tease, couldn't resist shaking the bridge from where he stood on solid ground, and I hurried back to shore.

When we stopped for our picnic lunch, Mrs. Kiser took a picture of Blondie and me under a blossoming rhododendron. I was a bit disappointed when Little Switzerland did not look like a scene from my favorite book "Heidi," but there were no other disappointments in that wonderful day. Perhaps my greatest surprise was discovering that the Blue Ridge Mountains really are blue.

Ramona "Ronnie" Stone, West Jefferson, Blue Ridge EMC

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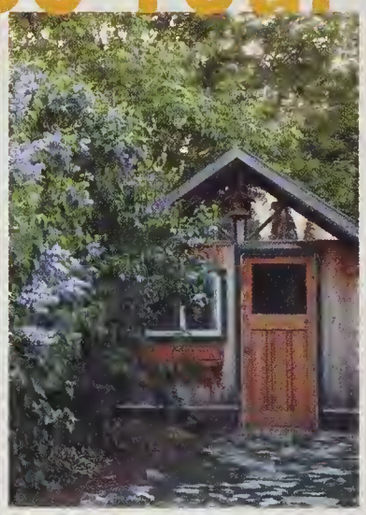

Used to be, the shed was utilized to store farm and garden tools and materials. Period. But folks today use shed kits, convert existing sheds, and build and buy new sheds to create home studios, workshops, offices, playhouses, even pool cabanas. They dress up their sheds with window shutters, window boxes, art, advertising signs and other decorative touches. If you have an amazing shed, send us one or two photos of your shed, and the story behind it.

A panel of judges will select the pictures we will publish in our May 2012 magazine. We will pay $50 for each shed published. We retain reprint rights. We may post on our website more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)

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Photos of vintage cars

Photographer Phil Bisesi developed his love of cars at age 6 during the early 1960s, Detroit's heyday of auto design. Back then, designers gave each car a unique personality that materialized in fabulous fins, oversized fenders and glossy chrome grilles. Young Phil would sit on his front porch and identify passing cars by make, model and year (which seemed to impress the adults). His interests in cars and photography later intersected and the result is a collection of old car photos taken mostly in salvage yards around North Carolina and beyond. Phil's recent interest is HDR (high dynamic range) photography, which reveals details that are lost in normally exposed images. An 8-by-10 print mounted on an 11-by-14 mat is $20 (other sizes available), plus shipping. Prints are sold through the Etsy.com link below. You may also contact Phil, who lives in Pittsboro, via his email below.

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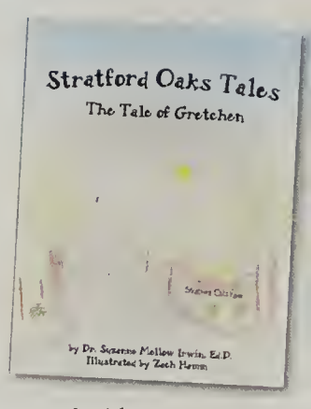

Tale about goat Gretchen

The first in a series about the animals at Stratford Oaks Farm, "Stratford Oaks Tales, The Tale of Gretchen" is a literary adventure that took shape when the pygmy goat (Gretchen) at the writer's farm was injured. "Seeing her struggle to survive a terrible injury, I was inspired to tell her story," says Suzanne Mellow-Irwin, the book's author and a Blue Ridge Electric member. The book is illustrated by Zach Hamm, who was diagnosed with autism at age 4. His drawings remind us that you can successfully overcome big obstacles in your life. Mellow-Irwin says, "When I saw the work that Zach was producing, I asked him to come to the farm and draw—through his eyes—the fields, barn area and animals." Mellow-Irwin, who took Gretchen the goat, topped with a red bow, to a speaking engagement so children could actually see her, has worked as a superintendent of schools and holds a doctorate from UNC-Chapel Hill. She lives in Sparta. "Stratford Oaks Tales, The Tale of Gretchen" is published by Imaging Specialists, Inc. in Sparta. Softcover, 68 pages, $11 (includes tax).

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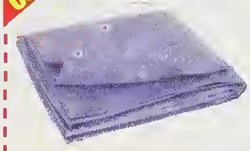

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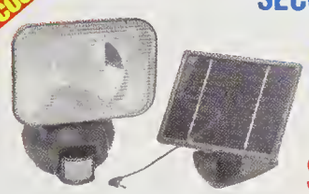

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Momma Holding Renee © 2003 Beverly McIver

Getting To Know. . .

Beverly McIver

Known for: Acclaimed contemporary artist who explores racial, gender and occupational identities

About: The youngest of three children, McIver was born in Greensboro in 1962. Her family was quite poor and her older sister, Renee, mentally disabled. McIver worked hard to make something of herself, earning a bachelor's degree in art from North Carolina Central University of Durham, a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Pennsylvania State University and an honorary doctorate from NCCU, where she teaches art. McIver's numerous awards include a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and a Radcliffe Fellowship from Harvard University. McIver is Renee's legal guardian and has made Renee a frequent subject, as well as other family members, in her expressive art. Her themes often examine family, love and emotional ties.

Beverly McIver

Now: "Reflections: Portraits by Beverly McIver" is at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh through June 24. It highlights paintings that commemorate her life and people closest to her. Visit www.ncartmuseum.org. A documentary about McIver's life and caregiving, called "Raising Renee," premiered in 2011 and netted high awards. For more about future airings, visit www.westcityfilms.com.

Dora's Dance © 2002 Beverly McIver

Maggie Smothers Flynn of Blue Ridge Photography

Field trip!

KidSenses Museum offers stimulating exhibits that fire the imagination. Children can pretend they are chefs at its Pueblito restaurant, report the weather at WFUN-STUDIO, explore the Word Forest and climb inside a giant kaleidoscope. The museum's full name is KidSenses Children's InterACTIVE Museum, located in downtown Rutherfordton. It holds special workshops for hands-on learning in science, art, health, literacy and more. There are also outreach programs, including a portable planetarium, available for your school, camp and church. (828) 286-2120 or www.kidsenses.com

tar heel lessons

a guide to NC for teachers and students

Cheery Snowman

Here's a fun project for kids, with just a little cutting help from an adult.

Family Features.com

Materials:

- 1 Standard pack (500-count) of Q-tips cotton swabs
- 3 Styrofoam balls; 1 large, 1 medium, 1 small
- 1 brown pipe cleaner
- 1 sheet wax paper
- 1 Popsicle stick or floral stake
- Child-safe scissors
- Child-safe, non-toxic black paint
- Child-safe, non-toxic orange paint

Carefully cut the bottom off the largest Styrofoam ball so it lays flat. Using a Popsicle stick or floral stake, stack all three Styrofoam balls (largest at bottom). Fold and twist five cotton swabs in half; dip nine halves into black paint and one into orange paint. Lay flat on wax paper to dry.

Cut pipe cleaner in half; insert into sides of middle Styrofoam ball as arms. Begin folding cotton swabs; insert into foam balls until covered. Insert black cotton swabs into top ball for coal eyes and mouth and orange cotton swab as the carrot nose. For more craft ideas, visit www.qtips.com or Qtips on Facebook.

Riddle: What's the only thing you can break when you say its name? **Answer:** Silence.

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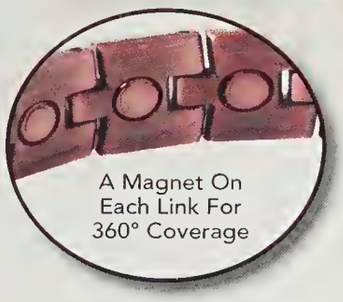

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–Abraham Lincoln

Use the capital letters in the code key below to fill in the blanks above.

E G H I M O P R V W means
u n s c r a m b l e

Oh, Kay!

MATCHBOXES

3 7 1 9 5 7 8 4
I G F L O G D U

x 2
M

R

Solve this multiplication problem and write your answer in the box tops, one digit to each box. Then match boxes to find the name of a North Carolina county in your answer.

To see how we solved it, send e-mail to joyner@carolinacountry.com. Place Joyner in the subject line.

HAIKU

Hai·ku (noun): a form of Japanese poetry with 17 syllables in three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, often describing nature or a season. (Encarta Dictionary)

Burma Shave signposts,
despite ***adverse*** *conditions,*
pleased little shavers.

–cgj

Domi-No.s

T	A	L	2 C	A
			X	2 C
R	U	R	A	L

U	Y	R	E	L	T	R
					X	2 C
E	L	E	2 C	T	R	I	2 C

Each letter in these multiplication problems stands for a digit. Given C=2, can you replace the missing digits to find the value of RURAL ELECTRIC? Repeated letters stand for repeated digits.

For answers, please see page 37

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By Jim Dulley

Whole-house surge protectors offer some coverage from power surges

People often think of only electronic gadgets, such as computers, game consoles and audiovisual items, as being at risk from electrical surges. Actually, nearly every electric item in a house today has sensitive electronics that can be damaged by a surge. These include kitchen ranges, dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, air conditioners and fans.

A common source of an electrical surge is lightning. The voltage and current spikes from just a single lightning strike are enormous, and there are typically many during a thunderstorm. If your house and wiring experience a direct or very nearby lightning hit, even a good surge suppressor will probably not be able to protect all electronic items.

When a storm is forecast and you begin to hear thunder, unplug as many of your electronic devices as possible. Just switching them off may not be adequate protection from voltage and current surges. A huge voltage surge can arc across an open switch and still fry the electronic components in an expensive device.

Many times, it's the repeated smaller electrical surges that damage electronic equipment. These can be generated by the switching on and off of inductive equipment (usually electric motors) in nearby businesses. Some of these smaller surges can even be generated by motors from your own vacuum cleaner, refrigerator compressor or clothes washer through your home's wiring.

It usually takes a long time for these numerous smaller surges to cause failures. The wire and circuit board insulation can slowly break down from each small surge and normal aging. Eventually, a wire may short out or the electronic component begins to malfunction and the device fails. These surges can also reduce the life of many types of light bulbs.

Whole house protection

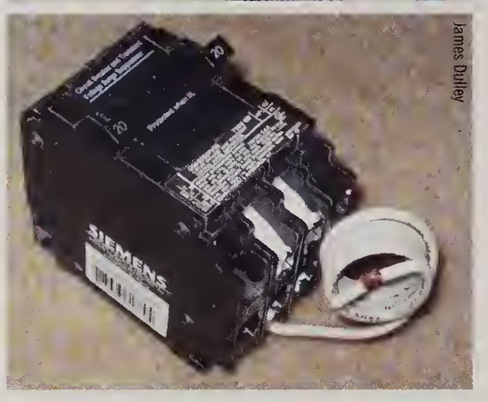
There are several types of whole-house surge suppressors designed to protect all of the wiring circuits in a house. Some mount on the circuit breaker panel indoors or are built into a circuit breaker. Others are designed to mount at the base of the electric meter. I recommend hiring an electrician to do the installtion.

There are differences in their protection. A common design uses metal oxide varistors (MOV) to dissipate the surge before it flows through the house wiring. Think of it as a floodgate. At normal voltages, the gate is closed, preventing leaks. But if the voltage gets too high, the gate opens, allowing the excess damaging current to pass to ground, protecting the equipment.

If the components (including MOVs) in a surge suppressor are too small, they can't handle the surge, and they fail. Using larger components, rated to handle more Joules (a measure of energy), allows the suppressor to safely dissipate a larger surge. When comparing surge suppressors, a higher number is better for the total energy dissipation. Clamping voltage is the voltage that is required for the "floodgate" to open—for the MOV to conduct electricity. A lower number for this is usually better.

For the most sensitive electronic devices, also use point-of-use surge suppressors for extra protection.

Even though the surge suppressor can protect your electronics, a large surge may burn out the MOVs. Many models have a light to indicate if they are still functioning. Check it, especially after a thunderstorm.



This whole-house surge suppressor is mounted beneath the circuit breaker panel in Jim Dulley's house.

This 20-ampere circuit breaker has surge suppression built into it.

It's important to note that electronic devices like computers and entertainment systems have multiple connections, including satellite or cable, phone or network, in addition to the power connection. Any can serve as a path for a surge to cause damage. Surge suppression installed on the power line doesn't guarantee protection.

For the most sensitive electronic devices, also use point-of-use surge suppressors for extra protection. They are inexpensive and let you completely switch off the power to save electricity when the device is not being used. Look for models tested for compliance with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Standard 1449, or ask your local electric cooperative for advice.

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Have a question for Jim?
Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

The following companies offer efficient surge suppressors:

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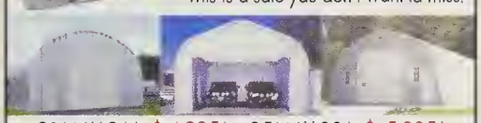

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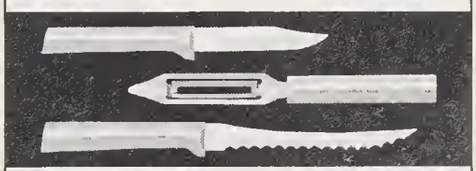

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Tim Laughlin: A Mardi Gras Celebration
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Gena Britt, an award-winning professional bluegrass musician today, grew up in Star and was a hit at age 13 (shown) when she performed at the Star Fiddlers' Convention in 1986. (Montgomery Herald photo by Betsy Perdue)

Fiddlin' in Star for 85 years

For the 85th year, fiddlers, dancers and old-time bluegrass music fans will light up the night on Saturday, March 3, in the Montgomery County community of Star. That's when the annual Star Fiddlers' Convention takes place in the East Montgomery High School gym. Sponsored by Star's Halcyon Woman's Club with help from the Star Volunteer Fire Department and a whole lot of others, the evening has long produced one of the best foot-stompin' times anywhere.

The Fiddler's Grove Ole Time Fiddler's & Bluegrass Festival held Memorial Day weekend in north Iredell County's Union Grove may be older by three years, but the Star Fiddlers' Convention brings in music and good times that are just as uplifting, especially when folks are ready for winter to go away.

A longtime tradition at the Star event is the "practicing" that goes on offstage where musicians and their fiddlin' and banjo followers gather in cleared-out classrooms to reacquaint themselves with one another and show off their stuff. This has long been known as not only a proving ground for accomplished musicians, but also where young ones first get bit by the bug.

It all starts at 5 p.m. when contestants begin to register for their age groups at the desk. (The fee is refundable after they perform.) That's also when the food gets served in the cafeteria: barbecue, hot dogs, all the fixin's, desserts. General admission is $7 ($2 for children 6–12 years old, younger ones free).

The fiddlin' contest gets rolling around 6 p.m. This is bluegrass and old-time music only. No electrical instruments. Bands of four or more can perform two numbers, and the dancers make it all that much livelier. Single players may also register and compete. In the end, they'll give out more than $2,000 in cash prizes plus lots of ribbons. A favorite contest is the Best Up & Coming Young Bluegrass Talent for those age 16 and under.

For more information, call (910) 428-9218.

By Arnie Katz

Which is better: a fireplace or woodstove?

Q: I have a wood fireplace that we use every now and then, and I'm thinking about getting a woodstove to reduce my heating bills. Does this make sense?

A: That depends on a lot of different factors.

A traditional wood fireplace heats the people in front of it and, to some extent, the room it's in. In some homes it can heat much of the house, as long as bedroom doors are left open. That's the good news. Mostly, it creates a nice atmosphere—cozy and warm, comfortable crackling sounds—and is a very pleasant way to spend an evening.

A well-designed and properly installed woodstove can be an effective way to heat your home or part of your home.

The bad news is that burning wood in an open fireplace is very inefficient. In order to get the oxygen it needs to burn and carry byproducts (smoke, carbon monoxide, particulates) up the chimney and out of your house, your fireplace has to pull air from the room it's in. This air has to be replaced, which means you'll end up sucking outside air into your home. Depending on where that air comes in, you may feel a draft, which makes you colder. You'll also have to heat the cold air that's now in your home.

So in most homes, a fireplace is not a very sensible option for staying warm, unless you want to live in one room and are comfortable heating one side of your body at a time. A well-designed and properly installed woodstove, on the other hand, can be a very effective way to heat your home or part of your home. Here are some things to consider:

- **Do you have a dependable supply of firewood close by?**
- **Are you living close to other houses?** Wood smoke does bad things to people's lungs. If you are on a large lot or on a farm, it's unlikely the particulates coming out of your chimney will impact your neighbors. If you live in town or in a subdivision with homes close by, frequently burning wood might be annoying and even harmful to others.
- **Is your existing chimney in good shape, and can it be used for a stove?** I would get a professional opinion on this.
- **Can you pipe the combustion air directly into the stove?** Some stoves have outside air kits to do this, others don't. This can improve efficiency and reduce the chances of the stove back-drafting into the living space.

Consider not only the cost of the stove and the installation, but also the ongoing costs: firewood, tools, chimney cleaning, catalytic element replacement (if you get a stove that has one).

There are also other health considerations. If you cut and split and stack the wood yourself, it can take the place of a gym membership. Great aerobic exercise, particularly if you split the wood by hand. On the other hand, the emergency rooms are filled with weekend lumberjacks doing serious damage to themselves with chain saws and axes.

Does it make sense to replace your fireplace with a woodstove? It might, particularly if you live in the country, are comfortable around large tools, enjoy outdoor exercise and plan to use the stove as a substantial part of your home heating strategy. But if you plan to just use it a few times a year, the added efficiency won't ever pay for the stove.

Arnie Katz is director of training and senior building science consultant at Advanced Energy in Raleigh (www.advancedenergy.org). Send your home energy questions to editor@carolinacountry.com

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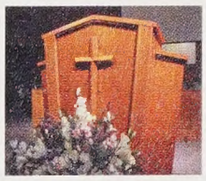
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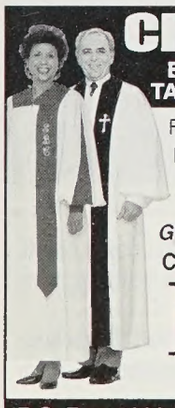
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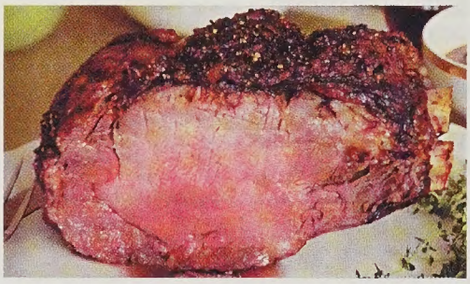
Slow Cooker Scalloped Potatoes

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 can (10¾ ounces) condensed cream of potato soup
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 pounds small red potatoes (about 6), very thinly sliced
- 1½ cups shredded triple cheddar cheese with a Touch of Philadelphia
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Mix first 3 ingredients in large bowl. Add potatoes; toss to coat. Spoon ⅓ into slow cooker sprayed with cooking spray; top with ¾ cup cheese. Repeat layers; cover with remaining potato mixture. Cover with lid. Cook on high 3½ to 4½ hours (or on low 7 to 8 hours). Stir well; sprinkle with paprika and chives.

Use red potatoes — they'll hold their shape during hours of cooking. Place sliced potatoes in a bowl of cold water until ready to cook to prevent them from darkening.



Standing Rib Roast With Two Sauces

- 1 beef rib eye roast (5-pound), 2 or 3 ribs
- 2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns, cracked
- 4 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, divided
- 1 cup sour cream
- ¼ cup Kraft prepared horseradish
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 sweet onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 package (8-ounce) sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 cup fat-free reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1 tablespoon Grey Poupon Dijon mustard

Heat oven to 350 degrees F.

Place meat, fat-side up, in roasting pan. Press peppercorns and 2 teaspoons thyme onto surface of meat. Bake 2 to 2¼ hours or until 135 degrees F. (To check for doneness, insert probe of instant-read thermometer 2 to 2½ inches into thickest part of meat.) Meanwhile, mix sour cream, horseradish and sugar in serving bowl. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Remove meat from oven. Cover meat with foil; let stand 15 to 20 minutes or until medium-rare doneness (145 degrees F).

Meanwhile, melt butter in large skillet on medium heat. Add onions; cook and stir 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Add mushrooms; cook and stir 6 minutes or until tender. Sprinkle with flour; cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in broth; simmer 5 minutes or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in mustard and remaining thyme.

Slice meat. Serve with sauces.

Black Forest Delight

- 1 package (2-layer) devil's food cake mix
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 package (3-ounce) Jell-O cherry flavored gelatin
- ¼ cup cold water
- ⅔ cup sour cream
- ⅔ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tub (8-ounce) Cool Whip whipped topping, thawed
- ⅓ cup drained maraschino cherries, divided
- 1 square semi-sweet chocolate

Prepare cake batter and bake as directed on package for 2 (8 or 9-inch) round layers. Loosen cakes from sides of pans with knife; cool in pans 15 minutes.

Add boiling water to gelatin mix; stir 2 minutes until dissolved. Stir in cold water. Pierce cake layers with large fork at ½-inch intervals. Pour half the gelatin over each cake layer. Refrigerate 3 hours.

Mix sour cream and sugar in medium bowl; gently stir in Cool Whip. Dip bottom of 1 cake pan in warm water 10 seconds to loosen; invert cake onto plate. Carefully remove pan; spread cake with 1 cup Cool Whip mixture. Reserve a few cherries for garnish. Chop remaining cherries; sprinkle over cake on plate. Remove remaining cake layer from pan; place on first cake layer. Frost top and sides with remaining Cool Whip.

Melt chocolate as directed on package; cool slightly. Drizzle over cake. Garnish with reserved cherries. Store in refrigerator.

From Your Kitchen

Crescent Roll Pinwheels

- 1 package (8-ounce) cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese (4-ounce)
- ⅓ cup drained roasted red bell peppers (from a jar), chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped green onions
- 6 slices packaged precooked bacon (from 2.2-ounce package), chopped
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cans (8-ounce each) Pillsbury refrigerated crescent dinner rolls (8 rolls each)

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. In a large bowl, mix cream cheese, mayonnaise, cheese, roasted peppers, green onions, bacon and oregano leaves until well blended. Add salt and pepper. Remove dough from 1 can and unroll, but do not separate into triangles. Press perforations to seal, forming 1 large rectangle (or you can use the crescent roll sheets). Spread half the cream cheese mixture evenly over dough rectangle, leaving ½ inch edge on one short end of rectangle. Starting with other short end, roll up dough into log. With serrated knife, cut log into 12 slices. Place slices cut side down on ungreased cookie sheet. (Filled dough log may be wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerated 1 hour for easier slicing.) Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Repeat with second can of dough and remaining cream cheese mixture. Serve warm.

This recipe comes from Donna Cavanaugh of Wake Forest.

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